

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00
PRS-01 SP-02 L-01 PM-03 DODE-00 /040 W
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R 181956Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8386
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 08611

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, WB, GW, GE, UR, US
SUBJECT: FRG DISSUADES OPPOSITION YOUTH GROUP FROM
STERNFAHRT II TO BERLIN

REF: BONN 7935

BEGIN SUMMARY. THE FRG REP IN THE BONN GROUP HAS
INFORMED US THAT THE PLANNED JUNE 17 BERLIN "STERNFAHRT"
(A CONVOY OF BUSES FOR THE PURPOSE OF HOLDING A RALLY OF
THE OPPOSITION CDU JUNGE UNION) HAS BEEN CANCELLED AT
THE REQUEST OF THE FRG CHANCELLERY. SIMILAR TRIPS IN
THE PAST HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED PROVOCATIVE BY THE GDR AND
HAVE RESULTED IN GDR-CAUSED DIFFICULTIES ON THE BERLIN
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TRANSIT ROUTES. THE GDR APPARENTLY SUGGESTED TO THE
FRG, WHILE STILL IGNORANT OF THE CHANCELLERY'S INTER-
VENTION WITH THE CDU, THAT THE SAME THING MIGHT OCCUR
WITH THIS STERNFAHRT. THE FRG HAS QUIETLY INFORMED
THE GDR NOT ONLY THAT THE STERNFAHRT HAS BEEN CANCELLED
BUT THAT IT WAS DONE AT THE CHANCELLERY'S REQUEST.
THE CHANCELLERY'S UNUSUAL ACTION IS PROBABLY AN

ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT CALM STATE OF FRG/GDR RELATIONS IN ORDER NOT TO EXACERBATE THE SITUATION AT A STAGE WHEN THE FRG IS PREPARING TO COMMENCE MAJOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GDR. WE ARE TOLD THAT A JUNGE UNION MEETING WILL STILL TAKE PLACE IN BERLIN. ASSUMING THAT THE JUNGE UNION DOES NOT TRAVEL IN A CONVOY TO BERLIN, WHETHER THE GDR INTERFERES WITH TRANSIT TRAFFIC COULD BE AN INDICATION OF THE SUCCESS OF THE CHANCELLERY'S ATTEMPTS TO DEFUSE THE TRIP. END SUMMARY.

1. IN MAY 16 BONN GROUP MEETING, FRG REP (HENZE) RAISED SUBJECT OF "TRANSIT PROBLEMS" BETWEEN BERLIN AND FRG. HE NOTED PRESS REPORTS THAT CDU JUNGE UNION WOULD UNDERTAKE BUS TRIP "STERNFAHRT" (RALLY) TO BERLIN IN ORDER TO MOUNT A DEMONSTRATION ON JUNE 17, THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1953 EAST GERMAN UPRISING. HE RECALLED THAT THE GDR HAD TURNED BACK SEVERAL SUCH BUSES ON A SIMILAR "STERNFAHRT" TO MARK THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE BERLIN WALL LAST YEAR AND SAID THE GDR HAS RECENTLY INFORMED THE FRG THAT THE FORMER HAS THE RIGHT SO TO INTERFERE WITH TRANSIT TRAFFIC. SPECIFICALLY, THE GDR RAISED THE PLANS FOR A JUNE 17 STERNFAHRT IN THE FRG/ GDR TRANSIT COMMISSION MEETING OF MAY 11, 1977 AS WELL AS IN A RECENT CONVERSATION BETWEEN GDR PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL KOHL AND FRG MINISTER OF STATE WISCHNEWSKI. ON BOTH OCCASIONS, THE GDR WARNED AGAINST THE "STERNFAHRT". HENZE SAID THAT BEFORE EITHER OF THESE GDR REPRESENTATIONS WAS MADE, HOWEVER, "THE CHANCELLERY" HAD TALKED TO CDU
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LEADER HELMUT KOHL AND TOLD HIM THAT THE PLANNED "STERNFAHRT" WOULD NOT BE A GOOD IDEA. STERNFAHRT HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN CANCELLED AND THE GDR HAS SINCE BEEN QUIETLY TOLD OF ITS CANCELLATION AS WELL AS THE CHANCELLERY'S INTERVENTION WITH THE CDU. HENZE ASKED THAT

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PRS-01 SP-02 L-01 PM-03 DODE-00 /040 W

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WE HOLD THE CHANCELLERY'S INTERVENTION VERY CLOSE IN VIEW OF THE OBVIOUSLY POLITICAL SENSITIVITY INVOLVED.

2. HENZE WENT ON TO INFORM US THAT THE GDR, ON FEBRUARY 24, SEARCHED A PROPERLY SEALED TRUCK DRIVEN FROM BERLIN TO WEST GERMANY. THE DRIVER HAD REPORTEDLY PARKED THE TRUCK ON AN AUTOBAHN REST AREA AND SLEPT FOR THREE OR FOUR HOURS. HENZE SAID THE FRG REGARDED BOTH THIS INCIDENT (THE ONLY ONE THIS YEAR TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE'S KNOWLEDGE) AS WELL AS THE THREAT TO INTERFERE WITH THE "STERNFAHRT" QUITE SERIOUSLY. (FYI DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT TWO SIMILAR INCIDENTS OCCURRED IN 1976 OCCASIONING AN ALLIED PROTEST TO THE SOVIETS. END FYI) HENZE SAID THE FRG DID NOT EXPECT THE ALLIES TO PROTEST THESE MATTERS TO THE SOVIETS BUT WISHED TO KEEP US INFORMED SINCE THE INCIDENTS REFLECT THE CONTINUING GDR ASSERTION OF ITS RIGHT TO INTERFERE WITH TRANSIT TRAFFIC.

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3. COMMENT: WE ARE AT SOMETHING OF A LOSS TO EXPLAIN THE FRG'S BRINGING THESE MATTERS TO THE BONN GROUP, ESPECIALLY SINCE NO ACTION APPEARS CALLED FOR NOR WAS ANY REQUESTED. IT MAY BE, OF COURSE, THAT THE CHANCELLERY, HAVING GONE OUT ON A POLITICAL LIMB BY DISSUADING THE CDU FROM PROVOKING A GDR REACTION, FELT COMPELLED TO TAKE SOME ACTION WHICH IT COULD CITE TO SHOW THAT IT WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE FRG'S DUTY TO PROTECT THE TRANSIT ROUTES. IF SO, THIS WILL NOT BE THE FIRST TIME THE FRG, WHEN ASKED WHAT ACTION IT HAS

TAKEN ON A DIFFICULT MATTER, HAS USED THE LINE THAT THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN REPORTED. TO THE BONN GROUP.

4. THE CHANCELLERY'S DECISION TO DISSUADE THE CDU FROM CARRYING OUT THE "STERNFAHRT," WHICH THE GDR WOULD REGARD AS A HIGHLY-PROVOCATIVE EVENT, IS PROBABLY AN ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT CALM STATE OF FRG/GDR RELATIONS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE UPCOMING NEGOTIATIONS WHICH THE FRG IS INITIATING. WHAT IS SURPRISING, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE CHANCELLERY TOLD THE GDR THAT IT HAD DISSUADED THE CDU. THIS WOULD HARDLY BE EXPLICABLE PURELY IN TERMS OF FRG INTERNAL POLITICS BUT MORE IN THE CONTEXT OF INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS. IN ADDITION TO PREVENTING AN EXACERBATION OF FRG/GDR RELATIONS, THE FRG, IN CONVERSATIONS WITH GDR REPRESENTATIVES, CAN POINT TO ITS ACTION AS A GDR DEBT TO BE PAID AS WELL AS A DEMONSTRATION OF CDU OPPOSITION SUPPORT FOR THE FRG'S ATTEMPT TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE GDR.

5. THE CHANCELLERY'S APPROACH TO HELMUT KOHL HAS A DOMESTIC POLITICAL ASPECT AS WELL. IT MAY HAVE BEEN AN EFFORT TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN KOHL AND HIS RIGHT WING, AND/OR BETWEEN THE CDU AND THE JU. (IN CONTRAST TO THE SPD AND THE FDP, THE CDU HAS NO SIGNIFICANT CONFIDENTIAL

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PROBLEMS WITH ITS YOUTH AFFILIATE.) WHATEVER THE MOTIVE, KOHL APPEARS TO HAVE PARRIED WITH A COMPROMISE WHOSE SIGNIFICANCE IS NOT YET CLEAR: I.E., WE UNDERSTAND FROM JU SOURCES THAT, INSTEAD OF A STERNFAHRT AS ORIGINALLY ANNOUNCED, A "KUNDGEBUNG" (MEETING) WILL BE HELD IN BERLIN ON JUNE 17. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW THEY PLAN TO ARRIVE IN BERLIN BUT IF THE MEETING IS HIGHLY PUBLICIZED AND A NUMBER OF THE PARTICIPANTS TRAVEL BY ROAD, THE POSSIBILITY OF GDR INTERFERENCE WITH THE BERLIN TRANSIT ROUTES REMAINS. IN VIEW OF THE FRG'S APPARENT EFFORTS TO DISSUADE THE CDU FROM A MORE OPEN MANIFESTATION, WHETHER OR NOT THE GDR DOES IN FACT INTERFERE WITH THE TRAFFIC MAY BE A SIGN OF THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD CURRENT FRG/GDR RELATIONS. STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

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